THE DYING MAN'S Last Sermon.

OR

The Fathers last Blessing.

Left and bequeathed as a Legacy to his Children, immediately before his Death.

Being comfortable Meditations and Preparations for the day of death; which for the worth of them are more worthy to be written in letters of *Gold*, than *Ink* and *Paper*.

By *Andrew Jones*, a servant of Jesus Christ.

Job 14. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a Woman is of few days and full of trouble He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he flieth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

Printed for W. Thackeray, P. Brooksby, John Williamson, and J. Ho[illegible]

THE

FATHERS

Laſt Bleſſing.

Left and bequeathed as a Legacy unto his Children, a little before his death.

THe Life of a Chriſtian is, or rather ſhould be a continued daily Meditation, for a preparation for the day of his death. The firſt Man living was called Adam. Gen. 2. which in the Original ſignifies a clod of red Earth: and he was arrayed and cloathed by God with the skins of dead Beaſts, and ad-

judged to the Earth to dig and delve in it. God would have his very Name, his Apparel, his Employments, to be continual remembrances of his Original, and premonitours of his mortality. O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would remember their latter end! For whatsoever a Mans Wisdom, Birth, Beauty, Strength, or State be, his foundation is in the Dust: Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return, Gen. 3. 19. There seems to be a vast difference betwéen a Cedar and a Shrub, a Vine and a Bramble, so long as they both grow together, but cut them down and burn them, and their Ashes will be one and the same. In this Mortal life some men sit upon the Throne, others are grinding at the Mill; some go clothed in Purple, and fare deliciously every day as Dives did, and others like Lazarus, lye at rich mens Gates, and have not so much as the crumbs of their table: but in the grave there is no difference, there the poor and rich are all one: The Worms feed as well on Rich Dives, as on poor Lazarus. Kings and Emperors must submit to Death, and lay down their Crowns and Sceptres at the Grave.

The

The Daughters of Jerusalem, as the Prophet Isaiah saith in the third Chapter and sixteenth Verse; Which walk with stretched forth Necks, and wanton enticing Eyes, mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their Feet, must at last drop into the Grave. And they that glory in the nobleness of their Birth and Blood, must make their Beds in the Dust, and acknowledge Corruption for their Father, & the Worms for their Mother. Why then should sinful Dust and Ashes be proud? For we brought nothing with us into this World, and it is most certain we shall carry nothing with us out of the World, as the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. 6. 7. And Holy Job saith, Job 1. 21. Naked came we out of our Mothers Womb, and naked shall we return, &c. And the Apostle saith, Heb. 9. 27. It is appointed for all men once to dye. There is nothing more certain than Death, and yet nothing more uncertain: Most certain it is we must all dye, but when, where, or how we must dye, that is altogether uncertain.

We read in the Scripture that all the Fathers dyed, Gen. 5. Adam the first man dyed; and Methuselah the eldest man, he

dyed, also Abraham the friend of God, and Father of all the faithfull, he dyed: as you may read, Gen. 25. 8. And *Abraham* gave up the Ghost, and dyed in a good old age, an old Man and full of years. David a man after Gods own Heart, who triumphed over all the Hosts of the Philistines, & slew Goliah, 1 Sam. 17. 49. yet was overcome by death: as you may read, 1 Kings 2. 10. And Solomon the wisest man, was constrained to submit unto death, as you may see, 1 Kings 11, 43. And *Moses* the servant of the Lord, he died, Deut. 34. 5. And what man is he that liveth and shall not see death? For as wise men dye, (saith the Psalmist, Psalm. 49. 10) so likewise the Fool and the brutish Person. We all, like the Disciples, run fast, who shall come first to the Sepulchre. We are no sooner born, but we begin to dye. Man that is born of a Woman is of few days he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, *Job* 14. 1, 2. in the morning they grow up and flourish, in the evening they are cut down and withered, saith *Moses*, Psa. 90. 9. And holy Job saith, There is an appointed time for man upon earth, and God hath set bounds beyond which he cannot pass, *Job* 7. 1.

At

At the end of his appointed time he must dye; yet the time when is very uncertain, as also the manner how: for one dyeth in full strength, and another in the bitterness of his Soul: God will have us ignorant of the day of our death, that we may be ready every day. We are but Tenants at will, and know not how soon our great Lord and Landlord may eject us. Death surprized Abel in the field, Gen. 4. 8. Ely sitting at the door, 1 Sam. 4. 18. and Jobs Children at feasting, Job 1. 18. Herod sitting on his Throne, Acts 12. 23. And as death it self is uncertain, so is the manner also uncertain; there is a natural death, & there is a violent death: a natural death is when a man, as a lamp goeth out, because there is no more oil left to feed it, and a violent death is when the soul is as it were thrust out of the body by some untimely accident. There is a timely death, when a man comes to his growth, in a full age, as a shock of Corn cometh in his season, which every godly man doth, though he dye never so soon, or never so young; And there is also an untimely Death: (that is) when a man is crept or cut off as an ear of Corn before it be Harvest. And there is a lingering death when the

soul

soul is besieged with sickness, and so starved out of his Habitation. And there is a sudden Death which strikes without giving warning, from which the Lord deliver us. And there is also a quiet Death, a departing in peace, when the soul doth as it were, steal out of the body.

Josiah he dyes by the wound of an arrow, 2 Chron. 35. 23. Abimelech by the fall of a stone, Judges 9. 53. Wicked proud Jezabel is eaten up of Dogs, 2 Kings 9. 36. There are thousand of casualties and diseases, and no Man living knoweth what shall be his end: For unto God the Lord belong the Issues of death, Psal 68. 26. There is but one way into the world, but there is a thousand ways out of the world: and we may all say of Death as David of Ahimaaz, he is a good Man, and bringeth good tidings.

For first, the Death of the body frees us from the body of death the remainders of corruption.

Secondly, the death of the body frees us from the misery and incumbrances of this life. So many are the miseries and afflictions of this Life, that were it not for the hope of Heaven, it would be worse than hell it self; crosses and afflictions come as fast upon

upon us as Jobs Meſſengers. The life of Man is like a Winters day, ſhort and very cloudy: Few and evil are the days of this Life, Gen. 45. 9. Man that is born of a woman is but of few days and full of troubles, Job 14. 1, 2. Laſtly, death tranſlates us from a Priſon to a Palace, from a Scaffold to a Paradiſe, from a vale of Miſeries to a kingdom of Glory, where God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes, Rev. 21. 4. Where there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain, where we ſhall be perfectly free from all ſin; therefore may we ſay with Solomon, Better is the dead than the living: And with St. Paul, To me to live is Chriſt, and to dye is gain, Phil. 1. 21.

Every man with Balaam deſires to dye the death of the Righteous, Numb. 23. 10. and in this they deſire well: For to dye well is a point of the higheſt concernment in the world, becauſe either eternal life, or eternal death depends upon it; for as the tree falls ſo ſhall it lye. But to dye well is not attainable, unleſs we have firſt learnt the art of living well: A fair day may have a foul evening, but a good life cannot have a bad death; for as David ſaith, Pſal. 37. 37.

Mark

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace: therefore it is good always to be in readiness for death; and whensoever the Will of the Lord is, willingly and cheerfully to submit unto it: for it is written, Rev. 14.13. Blessed be the dead which dye in the Lord, they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them. And if we be dead in Christ, we shall also rise with Christ, Rom. 6. 8. for when Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall we appear also in glory, Col. 3. 4.

And now my Son, as I have leisure and opportunity enough, so have I cause more than enough to meditate and prepare for Death. I bless God, neither my prosperity nor my adversity hath made me a stranger to the thoughts of Mortality: for meditating on, and preparing for death, is never unseasonable, although the time and manner of Death be always even uncertain: I bless God I am not so old as to be weary of life, nor so bad as to be either afraid to dye, or ashamed to live; my afflictions make me even sometimes desire to dye; but when I consider that it is the glory of a Christian to dye dayly, I desire to conquer

Death

Death by Faith, and hopes of a better life: Blessed be God, I can look upon the sting of death as unpoisonous, although it may be sharp, because I know my Redeemer Jesus Christ hath taken it away by his death. I can say, and that truly, I never found so much life of Religion, the feast of a good Conscience, as I have done since I came to converse so nearly with the thought of Death. I do wholly desire to depend upon God, and submit to his Will; both in life and death. I shall not think my Life too long or too tedious, if God by prolonging it shall be pleased to give me fresh opportunity to do good thereby, neither shall I think my death too soon, whensoever the Will of the Lord is to call for me: it is my honour & my exceeding great comfort that I can go as willingly to my grave as to a bed of Down, or Roses; the Will of God hath confined and concluded my will, I shall have pleasure in dying: for Death cannot deprive me of more than I am willing to lose when God sees it fit, whose mercy I am confident will abundantly reward my loss with the Joys of Heaven.

My Son, the God of Heaven and Earth be thy Portion: these are my last Words, for

for now the time is come, that I must leave this World and go to a better: hitherto as a Father have I protected and directed you; but now my time being come, my days being but of a span long, I must go hence, and shall be no more seen, Psalm 39. 13. See therefore that ye serve the Lord with all singleness and uprightness of heart in Godly sincerity, and he will be a Father unto thee in my stead. Keep a good Conscience all the days of thy Life, do to others, as thou wouldst have others do to thee: For that is the Law and the Prophets, saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. 7. 12. And then when the time shall come (which although you be young now, you know not how near it may lodge at this present: for many are living now, that must dye to morrow; who would weep if they knew they had so short a time to live) that when you shall lye upon your Death-bed, death may not affrighten you, but may appear unto you as blessed be God it doth now unto me, not in his ugly shapes and deformities, but stingless as a friend; thus shall you have comfort within you, that shall rejoyce you when all outward Comforts fail you: then every pain you feel

shall

shall be but as a pleasure unto you; because it shall prevent the Pains of Hell: then the Grave shall not appear loathsome unto you, but sweet because it was the Lords Bed. I bless God, I find the truth of this upon my own soul; and O that the Mercies of God to me, might move you and all others to love him, and to serve him to your lives end. And I charge thee before God, before whom I am presently to appear, that thou honour God above all things dayly and principally: let him be thy fear, and let him be thy dread, let him be thy counsellour, the joy and delight of thy Soul: and be sure thou set God always before thy face, so will he be a Lanthorn to thy feet, & a guide to thy paths. Labour strongly to suppress vice, and exalt vertue; strive to be in love with goodness, remember that thou must give an account for each idle hour, and every idle Word, as our Saviour saith, Mat. 12. 36. Let all thy actions then proceed from a good conscience, for thou shalt never thrive by such ways and means as God hath accursed; for that is a miserable gain that is gotten by the loss of the Soul: for what shall it profit a man to gain the whole World, and lose his

own

own soul, Mat. 16.26. Be always the same in the sight of God, for he seth all mens actions, be they never so secret: as thou appearest to be in the sight of Men. Take heed thou givest no aid nor assistance to any wicked words or works: neither countenance wicked Men in the least with thy company; for the Faults of those whom thou favourest will be imputed to thee. Be not a follower of those that enrich themselves by unjust gain: for it is better to be poor with honesty, than rich by wickedness: account that day lost in which thou hast not done or learnt some good. Be more careful to keep thy Word than thy Money: acquaint thy self with such as are good and vertuous: look upon every thing here below as very uncertain, so shalt thou not rejoyce overmuch in thy prosperity, nor be over-sad or dismaid in adversity. And what counsel I give thee here for the present, be sure thou treasure it up in store for the time to come.

My Son (saith Solomon, Pro. 1, &c.) hear the instructions of thy Father: hear ye children the instructions of a Father, and attend to know understanding, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the

know

knowledge of God: then ſhalt thou underſtand righteouſneſs, judgement, and equity, yea every good path; walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous; for the upright ſhall dwell in the Land, and the perfect ſhall remain in it. But the wicked ſhall be cut off from the earth, and tranſgreſſors ſhall be rooted out. Let not mercy and truth forſake thee, bind them about thy neck, write them upon the tables of thy heart, ſo ſhalt thou find favour and good underſtanding in the ſight of God and man. Truſt in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own underſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths; happy is the man that finds wiſdom, that getteth underſtanding, for the merchandize of it is better than Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies, her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of Life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retains her. My Son keep ſound Wiſdom and Diſcretion, and let it not depart from thine Eyes, ſo ſhall it be life to thy ſoul, and grace to thy neck: then ſhalt thou walk in thy way ſafely, and thy

foot ſhall not ſtumble. When thou lyeſt down thou ſhalt not be afraid, for the Lord ſhall be thy confidence. With-hold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it, Enter not into the path of the wicked, go not in the way of wicked men; avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, and paſs away, turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil, be not over-haſty to get Riches, but conſider it is the bleſſing of the Lord that maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow to it. Let not thine heart envy ſinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day. Be not among wine bibbers, nor among riotous Eaters of fleſh, for the Drunkard and the Glutton ſhall come to poverty, and drowſineſs ſhall cloath a man with Rags. Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its Colour in the Cup; for at the laſt it ſtingeth like a Serpent. Deviſe not evil againſt thy Neighbour, for he that deviſeth to do evil ſhall be called a miſchievous perſon Rejoyce not when thy enemy falls, and let not thine heart be glad when he ſtumbleth, leſt the Lord ſee it, and it diſpleaſe him; give not thy ſtrength unto Women, nor thy words to

that

that which destroyeth Kings. It is not for Kings to drink Wine, nor Princes strong drink; least they drink and forget the Law. Open thy Mouth for the Dumb, open thy Mouth; judge Righteously, and plead the cause of the Poor and needy. Say not thou What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not wisely imagine concerning that, but consider the work of the Lord; for who can make that streight, which he hath made crooked, Eccl. 7. 10, 13.

And further, my Son I would have thee to consider seriously of what I have said, & remember this as the last words of thy dying father: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man: For God will bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccles. 12. 13, 14.

Thus having briefly admonished thee in the words of the wise Man, I shall spend out my last breath in a word or two more, and I have done: it is some refreshment to my fainting spirits, to consider how you have begun & spent some years in the experience of troubles, & exercise of patience & indeed had

rather you should be good and afflicted, than great & jocond in the world; I hope God hath designed you to both, having so early put you on the exercise of his Graces, faith, love, & patience, which only will dispose you to these princely endowments & improvements that may gain you the love & favour of all those that fear the Lord. With God I would have you begin, & with God I would have you end you have begun well, the Lord bless you, go on & prosper, piety will make you prosperous at least it will keep you from being miserable: Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of the Life to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Nor is he much a loser that loseth all, yet saveth his own soul: I trust you have already tasted of that bitter cup whereof I have so deeply drunk. Above all, I would have you, as I hope you are already, well grounded & settled in religion, & the ways of God in which I charge you to persevere; for unless you've well-grounded & settled in religion, you shal never want temptations to destroy you: Therefore take heed of avering any faction whatsoever, for I have observed, that the Devil of rebellion doth turn himself commonly into an Angel of light, and reformation: when some

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mens consciences accuse them with Sedition and Heresie; they like the old Serpent pretend new light, & stop its mouth with the name & noise of religion; & when piety pleads for peace & patience, then they cry out Zeal, Zeal: be sure always to keep up well-grounded piety, and such fundamental truths, as mend both hearts and lives of most men: & with an equal eye & impartial hand, distribute competent rewards to such as by welldoing shall deserve them, which will undoubtedly gain you both the hearts & favors of the best, yea, and the most too, who though they be not good themselves, will be glad to see the works of vertue sweetned by temporal rewards.

And once more I do require you, & intreat you as a father, as a dying father, that you never suffer your heart to receive the least dissatisfaction to the truth of religion now established, wch I have by experience found to be the best in the world, & nearest agreeing to the word of God. Happy times I hope will attend you. The Lord bless you, & establish your soul in righteousness, that as you grow in years, so you may grow also in wisdom & goodness, in grace & favour both with God & Man. The Lord bless you & make his

face

fate to shine upon you. And now behold I am ready to be offered up, & the time of my departure is at hand, I bless God I can say as St. Paul did, 2 Tim 3.7,8. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth therefore there is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. And now I leave you & go before you to a better Kingdom, an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. 1. 1, 4 which the Lord hath prepared for me, and me for it, through the only and alone Merits of my only and all sufficient Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to whose blessed protection and mercy I commend and leave you: and so farewel till we meet, if not on Earth, yet in Heaven.

FINIS.

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